

Dear Friends,

This month covers Lent right up to Holy Week. Let us take it very seriously with the intention of developing our spiritual life and also offering our Lenten discipline to God for the renewal of the Faith, the fulfilment of Christ's prayer for the unity of His one Holy Church and the conversion of the world to the knowledge and worship of Christ.

As I wrote in 2006, 'it is easy to see what is happening around us in our local communities and the wider world, and forget that most of the problems starts with each of us.' There are so many people today who still regard themselves as good Christians, but know very little of the teachings of Christ and His Church, and so can easily be lead by others.

The faithful remnant of traditional Anglicans and other Christians are being pressurised to conform to the world and deny the eternal truths taught by Christ and even encouraged to deny the clear moral teachings of God. I was amazed to hear a Minister of Government say on the BBC Breakfast programme that Parliament had just passed a law to make it compulsory for all schools, which includes Faith Schools, to teach that same sex relationships are a valid and acceptable life style. The children must be taught that having married parents of a father and a mother is not the only normal family.

Same sex couples could soon be allowed to "marry" in church after a decision by Anglican bishops and other clergy to support a relaxation of the ban. It has been reported in The Times of February 23rd that senior bishops in the House of Lords will support an amendment to the Equality Bill next month that will lift the ban on civil partnership ceremonies in religious premises. We are continually reading of individual Christians being persecuted by dismissal from jobs, sneered at, and also lied about because of their faith; some even forbidden to display a cross on their person in some places of work.

Lent is a God-given time to look closely again at ourselves, and experience true liberation and grow in holiness. We must ask ourselves: As Christians and Traditional Anglicans do we really know, believe and practise the Faith taught by Jesus Christ and committed by Him to His Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church? Are we doing all we can to know the Faith, worship God in Christ with thanksgiving and share that liberating faith with others, and also inviting them to worship with us?

As our Lord promised, the Church has been guided by the Holy Spirit, to remember the story of Christ's earthly life and what He taught His chosen Apostles to teach. We read this in what we call the New Testament in the Church's handbook, the Holy Bible. The Holy Spirit continues to teach and guide the Church, as the Body of Christ, the correct interpretation of the Books of the Holy Bible. True Christianity as taught and practised by Christ's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is the only true faith which can liberate us from selfishness, hate and death, and bring reconciliation between God and mankind and between human beings.

Our holy Faith, as no other, teaches that every human being is made by God in His own image and loved by Him, and that no one is ever beyond His free and loving forgiveness if they repent of their sins against Him and wrongdoing against their neighbour and genuinely ask God's forgiveness.

Not only does He forgive all who repent but offers us the grace (strength) we need to follow Him. This grace is freely available through prayer AND the Sacraments of His Church.

The old Anglican Communion in which we believed we were called by God, and were blessed to be members, no longer exists as we knew it. It is now a number of religious Provinces with different beliefs and not all in full communion with each other, even within some of the Provinces themselves. From time to time we hear of a new departure from the teachings of Christ.

We often hear it said that "If Jesus was alive today He would do things differently." Surely, this is a denial that Jesus Christ is God, because, first of all, Jesus Christ rose from the dead and IS alive today; and secondly, to say that "He would do things differently" is to insinuate that He was only a man, albeit a good man, following the fashions of the world.

Our only hope, if we want to continue to practise our faith as Anglicans who have always professed in the Creeds to believe in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, is to seek 'unity without absorption' with the rest of Catholic Christendom. We must take seriously, and pray about, the offer of Pope Benedict of Rome, to establish full communion with the Church of Rome, but retain our Anglican identity.

We, Traditional Anglicans, who have already made a stand against the constant secularization and changes in the received teachings of the church, must not listen to the gossip and speculations of others, but prayerfully examine the Pope's offer and listen to the guidance of our Bishops in whom we have trusted to lead us through these sad times until now.

The gates of hell will never prevail against Christ's Church and for us in Christ there is a great future.

May this Lent be truly a very special one, and as we seek to grow in holiness may we walk together with Christ in His Body the Church, and rejoice in the celebration of the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and, in Him, our own.

Your Priest and Friend

Fr. Brian